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Farm Broadcasters Letter

Letter No. 2258

April 17, 1986

USSR GRAIN IMPORT EST.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's estimate of USSR grain imports for the 1985/86 marketing year has been reduced by 3 million tons to 31 million, the lowest level of imports since 1979/80. The estimate of wheat imports was cut by 1 million...of coarse grains by 2 million tons. The new wheat import estimate of 17 million tons is 11 million tons less than in 1984/85. Coarse grain imports, estimated at only 13 million tons, are less than half of last year's record level.

USSR'S NEW FIVE YEAR PLAN

The agricultural production goals for the USSR's 12th Five Year Plan from 1986 to 1990 are quite ambitious compared to performance in recent years. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, gross agricultural output is to increase up to 3 pct. a year, compared with just over 1 pct. a year during 1981-85. Grain production in particular is slated for a major increase and is targeted to reach 250-255 million tons by 1990 compared with an estimated 178 million tons during 1981-85.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD WHEAT PRODUCTION

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture the April world wheat production for 1985/86 is estimated at nearly 504 million tons, up 700,000 tons or less than 1 pct. from last month, and down 2 pct. from the 1984/85 record harvest. The wheat production in East Europe is estimated at 38 million tons, up 900,000 tons or 2 pct. from last month, but down 9 pct. from 1984. The European Community production is estimated at nearly 66 million tons, down 200,000 tons or less than 1 pct. from last month but down 14 pct. from 1984.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WORLD COARSE GRAINS PRODUCTION

The world production for 1985/86 of coarse grains is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at a record of nearly 844 million tons, up 1 million, 300 thousand tons, or less than 1 pct. from last month and up 4 pct. from the previous crop. Coarse grains production in East Europe is estimated at just over 69 million tons, up 2 million, 100 thousand tons, or 3 pct. from last month, but down 5 pct. from the record 1984 crop.

AUSTRALIAN WHEAT EXPORTS

The Australian Wheat Board announced that it has firm commitments for the purchase of over 14 million metric tons of wheat. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the major buyers are the USSR, China, Egypt, Iran, Iraq and Japan.

HIGHLIGHTS OF
WORLD OILSEEDS
PRODUCTION

The world production of oilseeds for 1985/86 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at a record of nearly 193 million tons, down 1 million, 600 thousand or 1 pct. from last month, but up 1 pct. from last year. The U.S. production is unchanged at 65½ million tons, up 11 pct. from last year. Foreign production is estimated at just over 127 million tons, down 1 million, 600 thousand tons or 1 pct. from last month and down 3 pct. from last year's record.

NEW USSR DECREE
IN AGRICULTURE

On March 29, the USSR published a lengthy decree on steps to improve the performance of Soviet agriculture. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that the decree allows for greater flexibility in food marketing at the regional and local level by establishing set targets for supply of agricultural commodities to the State and allowing farms leeway in marketing production above this amount. Among other provisions, the decree addresses the problems of worker incentives, credit and investment policies in agriculture, price policy and the need for more reliable cost accounting at the farm level.

USDA RED
MEAT
PURCHASES

Sec'y of Agriculture Richard Lyng announced on April 15 that the Commodity Credit Corporation made its first purchase of red meat under the 400-million-pound purchase program authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985. He also announced a new purchase program in support of the fed-beef market. The initial purchase of 5-3/4 million pounds of canned beef is one of the largest single buys of this product. Purchases of canned beef will continue to be made weekly. Additionally, weekly purchases of frozen ground beef and smoked, fully cooked, shankless hams are scheduled. Lyng also announced that CCC will begin buying high quality beef roasts to support prices to cattlemen who are operating well below break even levels. (For information on purchases, call 202-447-2650.)

FOREIGN-OWNED
U.S. FARMLAND

Foreign interests owned just over 12 million acres, or slightly less than 1 pct. of U.S. agricultural land as of Dec. 31, 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is 1 million, 900 thousand acres below the acreage reported in 1984.

INDEMNITIES
FOR HEPTACHLOR
COWS

Dairy farmers facing losses from heptachlor-contaminated feed may soon be eligible for indemnity payments, according to Sec'y of Agriculture Richard Lyng. The Administration has requested an emergency supplemental appropriation.

LOWER WORLD
GRAIN PRICES

Lower world grain prices in 1986/87 continue to be the focus of the current world grain situation and outlook, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. An initial result of this trend may be changing differentials between U.S. and foreign grain prices. This type of a change is likely to make U.S. grain relatively less expensive and therefore, more competitive. One example of the initial foreign response to lower prices is that the Canadian 1986/87 initial wheat payments will be significantly less than in 1985/86, down by a full 19 pct. By comparison, however, the U.S. loan rate has fallen nearly 38 pct.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

CURRENT AGRICULTURAL ISSUES...Sec'y of Agri. Richard Lyng recently held a press conference in Washington, D.C., where he described his immediate goals to expedite implementation of the 1985 Farm Bill and to regain lost export markets. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (166)

RED-MEAT PURCHASING POLICY...The U.S. Department of Agriculture is undertaking a number of actions in its red-meat purchasing policy to offset the market impact of the dairy whole-herd buyout program. USDA analyst John Riesz examines the latest actions of this policy. Vic Powell interviews. (167)

FARM LAND VALUES...U.S. farmland values averaged \$596 an acre last February, down 12 percent or \$83 from last year's \$679. USDA economist Bill Heneberry takes a look at factors contributing to this decline. Vic Powell interviews. (168)

56TH NATIONAL 4-H CONFERENCE...Audrey Wystrach, 4-H member from Arizona, talks about the theme of this year's National 4-H Conference, "4-H for Youth for America," and some of this year's objectives. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (169)

56TH NATIONAL 4-H CONFERENCE...Greater involvement of youth and adults in 4-H program development at all levels is one of the major objectives of this year's National 4-H Conference. Holly Harris, a 4-H member from Tennessee, talks about topics of priority concern in 4-H today. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (170)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1507... (Weekly 13½ min documentary) In the first of a two part look at the woes of Florida citrus producers, Brenda Curtis focuses on the effects of recent freezes in Florida.

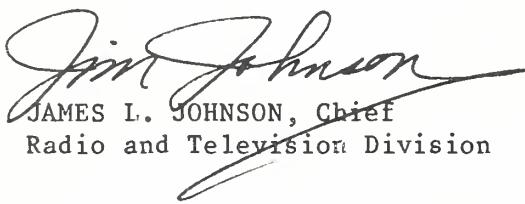
AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1496... (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; A report on first Conservation Reserve sign-up; Farmers Home Chief urges State compliance with new loan criteria; Biotechnology--new science and new controversy; Sec'y Lyng and the EC.

CONSUMER TIME #989... (Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) On being a stepparent; Junk food substitutes; Breast feeding and income; Saving electric shock victims; The comeback of lamb?

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE... Wed, Apr. 23, Poultry production; Fri, Apr. 25, Cattle on feed and Livestock slaughter; Mon, Apr. 28, Cotton and wool situation; Tues, Apr. 29, Crop and weather update, Rice and grain stocks, Wed, Apr. 30, Agricultural prices. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

OFF MIKE

"On the beautiful Eastern Shore, a half-mile from the Bay and the beach." If that sounds like a sell job, you're right. It's a quote from Amy Johns, news director of WICO, Salisbury, Maryland. She's looking for a farm director to replace Carl Briggs who left to be operations manager at WDMV, Pocomoke City, same state. Amy's phone number is 301-742-3219 ... Many farm broadcasters (probably the older ones) will remember Ken Gapen. He was Chief of USDA Radio and Television from 1946 to 1954. He was Layne Beatty's predecessor. Ken died in January ... Clay Pederson reports that on April 1, the Great American Ag Net merged with the Ag America Net and is now known as the American Agriculture Network. Lyle Romine is co-farm director of the combined nets with Clay. Headquarters will be in Fargo, NoDak ... Hugh Robinson (KKOW, Pittsburg, Kans) was appointed to a two-year term on the Kansas FFA Alumni Executive Council ... Something you TV types may be interested in. Dave Carter of USDA's Economic Management Service information staff has produced a 23-minute, broadcast quality video documentary on how USDA collects, analyzes and disseminates market information. It's called "Today and Tomorrow." If you would like a 3/4-inch videocassette, call Dave at 202-786-1494, or write him at USDA-EMS, Rm 228E, 1301 New York Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 ... More stories about the walking wounded in our ranks. In talking with Kelly Lenz (WIBW, Topeka, Kans), we learned he's suffering from a bad back, which he got while moving a washer and/or dryer, down a narrow stairway. And his co-worker Paul Pippert is finally back on the job after fighting off pneumonia ... Jack McConnell (KNOX, Grand Forks, NoDak) sent us his daily broadcast schedule...printed on label stock, designed for sticking on a tractor windshield (or wherever) as a reminder to the farmer of what's on where and when. Nice idea.


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 Radio and Television Division

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